

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, SA, YE, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET V.S. SAUDI MILITARY PROGRAMS IN YAR

SUMMARY: SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE CITES PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL PROGRESS IN U.S. - SAUDI MILITARY SUPPLY PROGRAM IN YEMEN. HE BELIEVES SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS ARE NOW OPERATING ONLY IN SANA, AND CAN BE ELIMINATED ALTOGETHER EVENTUALLY.

1. SALIH HUDAYYAH, SAUDI MILATT IN SANA HAS BROAD CONTACTS AND FUNCTIONS HERE, AND EVEN DURING INFREQUENT AND SHORT PRESENCE OF SAUDI AMBASSADOR TO YAR, SALIH IS PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT SAUDI REPRESENTATIVE HERE. IN MEETING WITH CHARGE THURSDAY, 4. AUGUST, SALIH WAS RUBBING HIS HANDS IN SATISFACTION ON PROGRESS SAUDIS WERE MAKING IN RE-EQUIPPING AND RETRAINING SOME YEMENI UNITS. PROCESS BEGAN SOME TIME AGO WITH SANA UNITS, SAID SALIH, AND FIRST TRUCKS AND OTHER VEHICLES HAVAIAT LAST BEEN DISTRIBUTED IN SANA. FROM OUTSET OF SAUDI EFFORTS IN SANA BRIGADE, SOVIET ADVISORS WERE PUSHED OUT AND SAUDIS SHARED WITH YEMENI OFFICERS PROBLEMS OF REORGANIZATION.

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2. SAUDI EFFORTS HAVE NOW BEEN SHIFTED TO MAJD BRIGADE, WHICH COMPOSED OF NORTHERNERS STATIONED IN TAIZ. SALIH SAID THAT SAUDIS NOW HAVE 27 OFFICERS AND MEN WORKING IN TAIZ AND HAVE COMPLETELY SUPPLANTED SOVIET ADVISORS IN THAT AREA AS WELL AS IN BAB AL-MANDEB AND MOCHA REGION. DEPARTURE OF SOVIET ADVISORS FROM TAIZ HAD OCCURED ONLY IN PAST WEEK AND REPRESENTED CON-

SIDERABLE BREAKTHROUGH IN SAUDI EFFORTS TO RE-ORIENT YAR MILITARY. SALIH CLAIMED THAT CONTACT BETWEEN SAUDI ADVISORS AND MILITARY IN HODEIDAH AND DHAMAR HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN BROKEN AND THAT ONLY IN SANA MILITARY CONTINUED TO HAVE IMPORTANT AND DIRECT CONTACTS IN SANA, SAID SALIH, SOVIETS WERE FOCUSED ON MILITARY COLLEGE, PARATROOP UNITS, ARMORED CARS, AND TANKS. SALIH WAS SANGUINE ABOUT ABILITY OF SAUDIS TO PRY SOVIETS OUT OF THESE UNITS ALSO, ALBEIT GRADUALLY, BUT SAID THAT SOVIETS WERE SO ENTRENCHED IN COMMUNICATIONS AND AIR FORCE UNITS THAT IT WOULD TAKE MUCH LONGER TO EFFECT A CHANGE THERE.

3. I COMMENDED SAUDI EFFORTS AND SUCCESSES BUT ASKED WHETHER EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION COULD CONTINUE PROCEED AT THE PRESENT SLOW RATE. SINCE DECEMBER OVER 1300 VEHICLES HAVE BEEN DELIVERED FROM U.S. SOURCES IN YEMEN. MOST ARE PARKED IN BAJIL, CITY ON ROAD TO HODEIDAH NEAR TIHAMA FOOTHILLS. VEHICLES COMPOSE VERY LARGE AND CONSPICUOUS CAR PARK AND ARE THREATENED WITH DETERIORATION FROM NON-USE AND HOT COASTAL CLIMATE. SALIH SAID SAUDIS NOW INTENDED TO BEGIN TO MOVE THESE VEHICLES UP TO HIGHLAND UNITS AS SOON AS DRIVERS WERE MADE AVAILABLE BY YAR ARMY. THEY WILL BE SENT FIRST TO TAIZ AND DHAMAR WHERE ANOTHER KEY UNIT, THE AMALIQA, WHICH IS COMMANDED BY PRESIDENT'S BROTHER, HAS ALSO BEEN RECENTLY SHORN OF ITS SOVIET ADVISORS. IN THE MEANTIME, SAUDIS ARE
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BRINGING IN MAINTENANCE TEAM FOR TRUCKS IN ORDER TO AVOID INEVITABLE DETERIORATION WHICH HAPPENS TO PARKED VEHICLES.

4. COMMENT: SAUDIS CONTINUE TO PUSH YEMENIS HARD TO EXPEL SOVIET ADVISORS HERE IN MILITARY FILED. SALIH THINKS THAT THE RECENT VISIT OF HAMDI TO SAUDI ARABIA HAS GIVEN NEW

LIFE TO SAUDI HOPES THAT THIS PROCESS CAN MOVE QUICKLY. HE DOES NOT GIVE MUCH WEIGHT TO YEMENI RESENTMENT AT HARSH DEMANDS OF PRINCE SULTAN AND OTHERS ON HAMDI, AND HE DOES NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YEMENIS FACE REAL DILEMMA IN RE-EQUIPPING AND RETRAINING THEIR MILITARY WITH HELP ONLY FROM SAUDI OFFICERS WHO HAVE LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN MANAGING MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIPS. I BELIEVE SAUDI POLITICAL PRESSURE IS NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE AT THIS JUNCTURE BUT THINK ALSO THAT CHUSMTM DHAHRAN SHOULD OFFER ALL PRACTICAL HELP POSSIBLE IN AREAS OF LOGISTICS, MAINTENANCE, AND TRAINING. THIS IS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT LARGE SALES PROGRAM IN WHICH DELIVERIES ARE ACCUMULATING AT GREAT RATE.
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